Wheat Prices

1218. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's decision to import wheat after a gap of six years has failed to bring down the domestic market prices;

(b) whether the FCI stocks have plummeted to an all-time low of 15 lakh tonnes against the buffer norm of 40 lakh tonnes and whether Government expects to make up for the shortfall in buffer when rabi wheat crop arrives in March, 2006; and

(c) the reasons for huge variation in market prices for wheat between wheat producing areas (North) and Southern States like Karnataka and Kerala?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) Since the announcement of the decision on 1st February 2006, the price rise in both wholesale and retail prices has been arrested. Retail prices have also shown a downward trend in Delhi and other centres in North Zone. In msot other centres prices have remained steady.

(b) At the current level of offtake the estimated stocks of wheat in the central pool as on 1.4.2006 is likely to be about 20 lakh tonnes against the buffer norm of 40 lakh tonnes for 1st April. As per estimates given by the wheat procuring States procurement is estimated to be 162 lakh tonnes during Rabi marketing Season 2006-07.

(c) The prices of wheat in southern States generally remain higher mainly due to the high transportation cost.

PDS Allocations

1219. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether volume of allocation of foodgrains and other items for distribution through Public Distribution System (PDS) reckons with number of ration card holders in the respective States;

(b) if so, the item-wise quantity norm per beneficiary of PDS, including revision made, if any, after 1991-92, so far;

(c) whether it is a fact that existence of huge volume of fictitious ration cards have been un-earthed during the recent electoral roll verification exercise in West Bengal by the Election Commission of India;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken, if any, pertaining to PDS allocation to West Bengal following this discovery?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The allocation of foodgrains under Public Distribution System (PDS) is made on the basis of poverty estimates of the Planning Commission for 1993-94 as projected on the population figures of the Registrar General as on 1.3.2000 or the number of ration cards issued by the State Governments/UTs, whichever is less. At the time of introduction fo Targeted Public Distribution system (TPDS), the norm for allocation of foodgrains for all the categories was 10 kgs. per ration card per month. It was increased to 20 Kgs. per ration card per month on 1.4.2000, and then to 25 Kgs with effect from July, 2001. It was further increased to 35 Kgs. per ration card per month with effect from 1.4.2002 and is continuing at the same level till date.

The monthly levy sugar was allotted on the basis of 425 grams per capita monthly availability for the projected population as on 1.10.1986 with effect from February, 1987. It was revised from January, 1996 onwards ont he basis of 425 grams per capita monthly availability for the population as per 1991 census. From March to July, 2000, the monthly levy sugar quota was based on 425 grams per capita monthly availability for the projected population as on 1.3.2000. From July, 2000 onwards the monthly levy sugar quota was based on 500 grams per capita monthly availability for the projected population as on 1.3.2000 and restricting the allocation of sugar to non-Income Tax payees and their families. From February, 2001 onwards till date the monthly levy sugar quota was based on 500 grams per capita monthly availability and restricted to people Below Poverty Line (BPL) in non-Hilly States/ UTs and to all population in the remaining states/UTs. Keeping in view special circumstances of some States/UTs the levy quota is allotted

on higher per capita availability as per details indicated in the Statement (*See* below).

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas makes allocation of PDS kerosene to States/UTs for further distribution under th PDS network. The quantity of PDS Kerosene for distribution per card holder is decided by concerned State Government/UT and varies from States to State.

(c) to (e) The Election Commission of India has reported that during the recently concluded special summary revision of electoral rolls in the State of West Bengal with respect to 1/1/2006 as the qualifying date, the Commission received reports fromt he Chief Electroral Officer, West Bengal and found mention in the Press that the police authorities of the State have registered FIRs against some persons in the Nadia district and some persons in North 24 Parganas district who were engaged in preparing fake Elector's Photo Identity Cards (EPIC), ration cards and other certificates. Details of such cases are available with the State Government of West Bengal. As the ration card is used in many cases as a supporting document (of address proof) for the purpose of inclusion of names in electoral rolls, it has been a cause for concern of the Commission. The Commission has asked its field functionaries to exercise the utmost vigilance in this respect.

It has been reported by the Food & Supplies Department, Government of West Bengal that checking of ration cards is a regular feature of their work. Due to death, transfer of residence, marriage, migration and various factors many anomalies creep in and they have to be regularly eliminated. Special drives are also coordinated by the District Magistrates in West Bengal. The total number of expiring ration cards eliminated during the year 2005 in the normal process is about 19 lakhs approximately. This checking is an on-going part of the work. The Food & Supplies Department, Government of West Bengal is concerned only with the cards issued by their officers and cards (genuine or otherwise) produced before them for checking. 'Fake' cards not issued by Food & Supplies Officers and if misused for allegedly obtaining EPIC and if detected by Police, cover a series of actions quite outside the purview of that Department. The Food & Supplies Department, Government of West Bengal do not coordinate or monitor 'Fake'/Fictitious' cards, if any, produced or used outside Public Distribution System.

Statement

The names of the States/UTs in case of which the levy quota is allotted on higher per capita availability in view of the special circumstances

State/UT	Monthly quota (MTs)	Per capita availability
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	389 MT	1008 gms.
Arunachal Pradesh	834 MT	700 gms.
Chandigarh	62 MT	611 gms.
Assam	18337 MT	700 gms.
Delhi	2610 MT	1271 gms.
Himachal Pradesh	4698 MT	700 gms.
Goa	120 MT	500 gms.
Manipur	1763 MT	700 gms.
Daman and Diu	11 MT	500 gms.
Meghalaya	1704 MT	700 gms.
Lakshadweep	115 MT	1625 gms.
Mizoram	666 MT	700 gms.
Nagaland	1179 MT	700 gms.
Sikkim	391 MT	700 gms.
Pondicherry	243 MT	583 gms.
Tripura	2647 MT	700 gms.
Jammu & Kashmir	6962 MT	700 gms.
Uttaranchal	6033 MT	700 gms.

Shortage of Ration Wheat

†1220. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received the information regarding the shortage of ration wheat from different States;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.